



# **BLACK-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**

# Overview

- **Definition of Black-American as defined by DOD Dir. 1350.2**
- **Describe the Nations of Africa**
- **Describe the African Society**
- **Explain the Slave Trade Period**
- **Describe the Slave Culture**
- **Define Slavery and the Economy**
- **Define the Black-American Culture**
- **Describe Black-Contemporary Issues**

# Black-American Experience

## ➤ Definition

- Black (not of Hispanic origin) as define in DOD Dir. 13 50.2 is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Africa

## ➤ Nations of Africa

- Early nations and Kingdoms include:  
Ghana, the first great empire (650AD-1200AD, Mali overthrew Ghana in 1235, Songhay captured Mali in 1469AD

# African Society

- **The Traditional African family was composed of the following:**
  - **All members of the community**
  - **In the extended family community members were viewed as family**
  - **The traditional family included not only the deceased but the unborn in the womb**
  - **The family recognized and accepted the belief that their existence depend on all family members living or deceased.**
  - **The eldest male is head of the family**
  - **Early Africa was a mixture of tribes, each had distinct language, and social structure.**

# African Society

## ➤ Family Roles:

- Men-providers,educators,and disciplinarians
- Women- responsible for social functions,children,the market, taking care of other children in the community
- Children- belonged solely to the family, birth extremely important, parents believed they were reborn through their children

## ➤ African Class System (Clans)

- Top Tier- born of free men
- Middle Tier- mostly workers no proof of belonging in the clan
- Bottom Tier- composed of the disgraced or degraded, slaves or POW's

# Slave Trade Period

- **Dutch warship brought the first 20 Africans to Virginia they were sold for needed supplies**
- **Approximately 7 million slaves made the journey in the 17th century (1 out of 5 died)**
- **Why Slavery?**
  - **Viewed as savages, animals, different, therefore less than human.**
  - **Blacks had a different lifestyle, color, culture and language**
  - **New nation required a stable work force**
  - **World business, isolation, different language, broke them down to adaptive superiority in order to survive**

# Why Slavery Worked

- **Lack of knowledge the Africans knew nothing of the land, food, and weather**
- **The slaves were made powerless, which allowed slavery to work**
- **Used Black slaves versus Native-Americans they could run away**

# Role of the Slave Family

- Marriage no legal standing but lasted for decades, (jumped the broom)
- Owners found marriage a stabilizing force
- Head of household changed from the man to the women, fathers were often sold
- Father viewed as a breeder, not able to choose mate
- Mother Transmitter of African history and culture
- Children considered “ebony” or “black gold”



# Social Status

## ➤ Dependent on:

- Free or slave- some Africans came to the new world free with Columbus
- Owner of the slave-owners position was very important, the more slaves one owned the higher the status
- Field worker, housework, laborer, artisan- status depended on where they worked
- Male-Female
- Complexion (dark vs. light) Light skinned work in housework, dark skinned in the field

# Music and Language

## ➤ MUSIC

- Music is and has been an important element of the African-American culture
- Couldn't use drums because they'd send messages and start an uprising
- Overheard the white church goers, changed the rhythm, rewrote the words to fit their dialect and to show their feelings

## ➤ LANGUAGE

- Communication with new slaves forbidden
- Expected to communicate with owner and show them respect, regardless of time in captivity
- 800 different dialects

# Religion

- **Slaves were slow to give up own religion, wanted to maintain tradition**
- **Church afforded a brief rest period and secondary gains**
- **Services given by White preachers < Black preachers could only preach in front of masters who controlled sermon**
- **Three types of churches, White with Black members, Black churches with White leadership, Black churches with Black leadership**

# Development of the Black Church in America

- **Blacks knew as long as they remained in White churches conditions would remain the same due to the following conditions:**
  - **Lack of self-help programs for the Blacks**
  - **Non-participation in church activities**
  - **Absence of Blacks in leadership roles**
  - **Doctrine that did not serve the needs of the Black's**

# **Impact of Slavery on the Economy**

- **Cheap labor force**
- **Slavery enhanced the status of owner through profit, prestige, depending on number owned**
- **Myths and stereotypes were used to justify the exploitation of Blacks**
  - **Ignorant, lazy, incapable of competing, and inferior in intelligence**
  - **Less than human**
  - **Natural station in life of Blacks was slavery**

# Slavery and the Economy

- **Early laws during slavery and their impact on Black Americans**
- **Emancipation Proclamation**
- **Reconstruction Period (1870-1877)**

# **Black American Culture**

- **Source for Black Culture**
- **Black-American Family**
- **Customs and Traditions**
- **Dynamics of Black-American Culture**
- **Religion**
- **Laws and Black-America, 1877 to present**
- **Civil Rights Movement**

# Black Contemporary Issues

- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Political Power**
- **Black on Black Crime**
- **EO Impact in the military**
- **EO in the military**



# Military Participation

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- Colonial Period
  - Revolutionary War
  - Post-Revolutionary War
  - Civil War
  - Indian Campaigns
  - Spanish-American War
  - World War I
  - World War II
  - Post World War II
  - Korean War
  - Vietnam era to present

# Summary

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